

Hōiho, Kūri me te Rērehi

Equine, Greyhounds and Racing



Key challenges

- Cost pressures
- Licensing requirements
- Skilled workers availability
- Mental wellness
- Attraction and retention of staff

Industry overview

- The Equine, Greyhounds and Racing industry is made up of three racing codes which include **Thoroughbred racing, Harness racing, and Greyhound racing**, and each code has a governing body.
- **More than 70% of the money generated** in the racing industry in 2022/23 directly benefited the North Island.¹
- It is **difficult to attract skilled staff**, with some jobs relying heavily on migrant workers to fill them.

Insights

Industry

- Racing industry activity contributed **\$1.9 billion to New Zealand's GDP** in 2024.²
- The industry has not been generating enough money to provide **investment in the upkeep of infrastructure or employee training**.
- Greyhound NZ is awaiting the outcome of a **government review into Greyhound Racing**.

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Workforce

- **Median earnings are lower** for workers in Horse and Dog racing activities industry than for workers across all industries in NZ.
- **Worker turnover rate** for Horse and Dog racing activities industry **is higher** than for workers across all industries in NZ.
- **Almost half** of those working in the Equine, Greyhounds and Racing industries **are female**.

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Learners and Providers

- More than 20% of the workforce have **no qualification**.
- **Enrolment numbers have steadily increased** over the last five years, with most of these learners undertaking workplace-based training.
- **Licensing requirements** do not align with qualifications, and the industry has been working to change this.

[Read more >](#)

1, 2 - IER, 'Size and Scope of NZ Racing 22-23_Draft Report 2024', accessed July 1, 2024

Opportunities

Qualifications

The existing licensing system doesn't align with qualification requirements.

- In the Thoroughbred sector, there is currently no qualification requirement to receive a license to train a horse.
- This is problematic as it is hard to attract young people to become trainers when transferable qualifications are not recognised.

Pathways

There is an industry perception that low staff retention is due to lack of clear career pathways and links to expected levels of remuneration.

- The Equine, Greyhounds and Racing industry struggles with staff retention, which may be connected to minimal vocational education opportunities.
- The nature of the work, which includes long and unsociable hours, and relatively low remuneration, are some of the factors contributing to staff exit. A change to immigration settings has also had an impact on the availability of a skilled workforce.

Roadmap Actions

Action	What is the problem?	What are we doing about it?
Assist New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing's development of a new training pathway	<p>Informal and non-formal learning plays an important role in skills acquisition for the industry. Formal education and training systems are not the only way in which people develop skills, with people gaining skills through work experience, informal and non-formal learning, and/or outside the country in which they work.</p> <p>The fact that these skills are invisible magnifies the challenge of skills under-utilization and mismatch and can lead to learners repeating unnecessary training.</p>	<p>Muka Tangata will work with stakeholders, including industry, providers and government, to identify and address barriers to recognising existing skills. Delivery and Assessment for the 21st Century is a joint project between Muka Tangata, Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence and Te Pūkenga.</p>
Support industry consideration of any workforce and training needs arising from the Greyhound Review	<p>The Government is reviewing Greyhound racing following concerns about animal welfare and safety.</p>	<p>Pending the outcome of the review, we will support industry to improve training and skills needs as required.</p>

Action

What is the problem?

What are we doing about it?

Simplify the New Zealand Certificate in Equine Racing (Level 4)

The existing licensing system doesn't align with qualification requirements. This is problematic as it is hard to attract young people to become trainers when transferable qualifications are not recognised. An industry review of the current licensing framework and training model is underway and may provide some improvements to the existing lack of alignment between licensing and qualifications across the entire racing industry.

We have worked with industry to simplify the New Zealand Certificate in Equine Racing (Level 4), with strands in Thoroughbred Racing Jockey, Harness Trainer, and Harness Racing Driver.

We have revised the qualification to remove overlapping content, reducing the Harness Trainer strand from 130 to 95 credits and the Harness/Standardbred racing Driver strand from 135 to 120 credits. In addition, we have simplified the Graduate Profile Outcomes (GPO).

Support industry efforts to address mental health and wellbeing

The Equine, Greyhounds and Racing industry struggles with staff retention, which may be connected to minimal vocational education opportunities. The nature of the work, which includes long and unsociable hours, and relatively low remuneration, are some of the factors contributing to staff exit.

We are working to support industry efforts to address mental health and wellbeing within the workforce. The New Zealand Thoroughbred Breeders' Association has developed a Mental Health and Wellbeing program, 'Starting the Conversation', focussed on helping participants in the industry to address pressures they might be facing within the industry. We will investigate the best ways of supporting initiatives such as these. This may be through partnering with a provider to deliver a piece of informal training, or more structural approaches to including mental health and wellbeing into qualifications.

***Keep up to date with progress on our Workforce Development Plans**

This represents a snapshot in time of the workforce development plan. For the most up to date information, please visit: mukatangata.workforceskills.nz or [sign up to our mailing list](#) for updates.